ALL INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

THE PHILOSOPHY OF WORK
AND
OTHER ESSAYS

PRINCIPAL,
GANDHIGRAM.
EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE.

By

J. C. Kumarappa

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WARDHA; C. P.
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J. C. Kumarappa

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I

The Philosophy of Work

Little do we realise the extent to which history of the human race has been moulded by the attitude man takes towards work. The Jewish approach was to look upon "work" as a curse from God. "By the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat bread" was the punishment meted out to Adam for his disobedience. Since then man has been trying hard to circumvent this curse. He wants to eat bread but he does not wish to sweat. The strong have said to themselves "We shall eat bread but the weaker ones shall sweat for it." This is how man has striven to get round the problem.

If we study history we shall find it replete with instances of civilizations based on the above attitude to work. Such civilizations had risen to some splendour for a while but the inevitable curse reduced them to ashes sooner or later.

Function of Work

The real purpose of work is to develop man's higher faculties, just as food builds and sustains the physical body. The body is composed of muscles, bones, blood etc., so we need proteins to build the muscles, calcium to form bones, mineral salts to purify the blood and carbohydrates to provide the energy. Similarly work taken as a whole caters for the growth of reasoning, imagination, venturesomeness, accurate functioning of the nervous system etc.

Milk is a wholesome food; but if we attempt to break it up into its component parts by squeezing some lime juice into it and with the casein that is deposited with the splitting of milk, we make *rasagoolla* and try to make that our staple

food, we shall die, as the necessary elements of food are not there. We need all the constituent elements of food to sustain life. Even the roughage plays an important part. The man who tries to live only on the palatable sweets, ghee, etc. will die of overeating just as surely as the man, who has only the roughage, will die of malnutrition. Hence, for a healthy growth and life we have to take our food with all its constituent parts: carbohydrates, proteins, fats, salts and vitamins. Some of it will be sweet, some salt, some bitter, some sour and so on, but they all go to make a balanced diet for the body. Food has to be eaten in bulk and masticated well. A healthy adult cannot live by sipping *sharbath*.

Analysis of Work

When we analyse work we shall not find it a curse in itself. It has two important components—(1) The germ of growth, *i. e.* a creative element which makes for the development and happiness of the individual and (2) toil or drudgery. Just as any seed may have the pericarp and the starch, and even as any balanced diet needs both the concentrates and the roughage to make it wholesome, work needs both its component parts to enable one to benefit by it. As the saying goes genius is one per cent inspiration and ninety nine per cent perspiration. Without the perspiration or toil the inspiration cannot become effective. The toil part of work is essential to enable one to grow through work. We have to take work as a whole and not divide it up into its constituent elements, trying to avoid the sweating part of it. We need the ninety nine per cent of perspiration to get even the one per cent of inspiration. No musician can aspire to be able to produce music merely by listening passively to radio music. By the ordeal of practising hour after hour, day after day, from year in to year out, he has to exercise his fingers and co-ordinate his ears to the sounds produced. Only then he can cultivate his faculty of music. There is no short cut to any real art, science, or culture. Yet people have been striving for short cuts and have ended in disaster.

Violence and Death

Before a person becomes a scientist he has to labour for years in a laboratory and cultivate a sense of smell which will appreciate sulphurated hydrogen ! These are inevitable. Therefore, there can be growth only when the pleasurable part of work is combined with the toil. One who seeks to avoid drudgery will not gain by the pleasurable part only. Though one may enjoy it for a time one will begin to deteriorate after a while.

When properly used, work itself functions as an outlet to the personality of the individual, it gives expression to that which is highest in man and develops his faculties. Whatever ideals, principles or religion a man may adhere to, are reflected in his every-day work. The reaction on the individual is, perhaps, much more important than the work done, because it goes to develop human personality and thereby contributes to human progress.

Whenever we interfere with the course of nature, we generate friction, which in the moral sphere we call sin, in the physical sphere we know it as violence which causes pain and death. The man who polishes rice and removes the nature ordained bran etc. suffers from the terrible disease beri-beri and dies. Similarly, the one who attempts to split work will come to grief and lose his higher faculties.

The Empires

Naturally, the toil part of work being unpleasant, human nature being what it is, there is always an attempt to avoid it or shift it on to someone else. But as no one is willing to take drudgery for what it is, it becomes necessary to use coercion. If we set out merely to enjoy life we shall have to force someone else to take up the toil part of work at the threat of the taskmaster's whip, Western nations made no attempt to overcome this divorce of the pleasurable germ from the drudgery part of work. The strong have always attempted to divide work and allocate the heavy part to the worker and retain to

themselves the higher and the more pleasant part. They definitely set out to glorify the pleasures of life, which in itself, involves the enslavement of others. It was on such a philosophy of work that the ancient empires of Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome worked, shifting the unpleasant part of activity, by which pleasure can be had, on to the captives made into slaves. By depriving masses of men of their freedom such empires flourished for a while and disappeared. By misappropriating land feudal barons enjoyed while the serfs laboured. By devising the money nexus the capitalist wielded power over labour. By securing political power through violence one nation dominated over the other weaker nations exploiting the latter's resources. In this way division of work has led to violence and destruction. The whole of this system is based on violence. No nation will find it possible to shift its toil to other nations and convert them into "hewers of wood and drawers of water."

According to Aristotle, slavery was ordained by nature. Work devoid of its opportunity for self-expression becomes drudgery, and slavery is the result. In consequence, the civilization of Greece and Rome regarded work as an evil. In the measure in which a man could free himself from work or heavy toil, he gained social status. Slaves were ordained by nature to toil away. Under such ideals these civilizations collapsed. We still find the same view point on work projected into the economic organization of the West.

By depriving man of his primaeval possession, personal freedom, the slave empires held sway. By dispossessing man of his most elementary instrument of production-land-the feudal empires flourished. By the invisible power of finance man was shorn of all his faculties and was reduced to live by the exercise of his muscles—as a beast of burden under modern capitalistic empires. By holding nations in political bondage imperialism has come into being, and violence has been enthroned at the centre of all human economic activity.

Type of Work

We may divide our daily activities into three kinds :—

1. Exertion under external order,
2. Exertion for its own sake,
3. Exertion with a self-chosen purpose.

The first form is slavery and saps the vital energy of human life. The second form is one in which there is physical development or pleasure, as in games and play, but it is in the third that we find true work with an aim which leads to the development of higher faculties in man.

Slavery

If work for work's sake were good, then indeed slavery would be goodness itself in "pill form". What is then wrong with slavery ? Initiative and interest are taken away and this leads to decay of personality. Thus the seed of mental development is sterilised. All that is left is pure drudgery. In its proper place toil is no evil, but by itself it is a drag. Just as for good digestion we need a good deal of roughage, we need 90 or 95% of toil to get the best out of work; and just as if we eat only the roughage and no food our stomachs will suffer and life may become extinct, so also if we have only drudgery, and no initiative, all progress will be at an end and society will die. The toil of slavery is not work but drudgery, and hence it spells death. If we give drudgery to the masses, as is done under the methods of large scale production, there is nothing but social death awaiting us. The irksomeness in slavery is largely due to external compulsion having taken the place of willing co-operation or personal initiative. We have seen that the first type leads to deterioration and death and, therefore, taking into consideration the wear and tear of human life, slavery is the most extravagant form of labour.

Status

In a predatory stage, work is looked down upon. A person is regarded clever if he can acquire the greatest amount

of material gain by putting forth the least amount of exertion. Physical work is certainly at a discount. It is because of this approach that exploitation has gained ground. The mentally alert, in order to save themselves from work, have lorded it over the less assertive ones whom they have forced to work for them. Further, in this stage, work is looked upon as a means of acquiring wealth. Wealth in its turn is not sought after for the means of providing the primary needs of life but for the acquisition of control over the lives of other men or, in other words for power. The western methods of production lead to concentration of power, and that is an unfailing proof that work in the West is misdirected into wrong channels. It does not matter whether the concentrated power is used for good or evil. If the means are bad, the end cannot justify them.

Both under Capitalism and under Communism, work aims at, or results in, concentration of power. In Capitalism power is concentrated in the hands of the Capitalist and in Communism in the hands of the few who run the State. Workers under such circumstances exist to work; man is regarded as made for work and he ends up by becoming a slave Work devoid of initiative and interest is slavery. One labours and someone else gets the power one's labour generates. Such work saps the life of man, and leaves him exhausted at the end of the day. This is the part played by work in all so-called industrially advanced countries of the world today. The working man functions as "dumb driven cattle." All initiative is taken out of him; he becomes a cogwheel in the economic machinery. With the deprivation of initiative, he loses interest and all sense of responsibility. He ceases to think, and the more he gets into the meshes of the powerful, the less resisting power he possesses to escape from the disaster awaiting him.

Play

We need not dwell on the second type. It is essential within limits. Play has its place in a well ordered life, but if it assumes the place of a main objective in life, then "all play and no work will make Jack a dull boy." The lower strata of

ancient Greece and Rome were slaves and passed out of existence as animals do. The higher stratà of society took to play and amusement and they developed physically but met with ultimate destruction morally and spiritually.

Wholesome work provides our body with energy, health and rest as a well balanced diet does. It provides bodily exercise while affording, at the same time, opportunities for mental development and satisfaction. The modern tendency however, is to avoid the discipline work involves, passing it all on to one class of society which is helpless, reserving to the dominant class, all the pleasurable consequences of work. It is sought to distil out the component parts of work to this end and then the bodily exercise alone in a pleasurable form, without the drudgery part of work, is obtained in pill form in games like Golf, Tennis, Cricket, Hockey, Football, etc. which are all naturally expensive luxuries beyond the reach of the poor.

Truncating work in this manner is like the way they manage on ocean liners to provide the muscles with the kind of movements they are accustommed to on land in games and hobbies, which for obvious reasons cannot be indulged in on a boat. On such liners the gymnasiums are equipped with machines which provide the substitutes for horse riding, etc. The horseman bestrides a saddle on a mechanical horse, holding the reins switches on the electric contraption into a "trot" or a "gallop". The saddle gives the semblance of jerks one gets on a horseback on land although here the rider has no live spirited animal under him. Similarly, there are oars for the boating enthusiast to pull away at, seating himself at a bench and kicking his feet on to a rest. The oars are provided with springs to give the resistance of water. Here we have horse-riding and boating bereft of the natural pleasures attendant on them on land—the scenery, the pleasure of movement through the air and over water. For a few days for the duration of the voyage, such contrivances will answer the purpose but they cannot be substitutes for all time for the

natural counterparts. Thus is work broken up into the component parts into routine and play, and some people are relegated for all time to the hard routine, and a few appropriate to themselves the play part of it.

When work is so divided without the balancing factor, the routine becomes drudgery and the play part becomes indulgence. Both are equally detrimental to human progress and well being. The slave dies of privation and the lord of over indulgence. These efforts, which have been made repeatedly through the ages, have adequately demonstrated over and over again their impotency to lead man to his maturity. In our own generation this attempt to secure the pleasures apart from the discipline, has let loose on humanity the wolves of war, pestilence, famine and death. Are we not to cry 'halt' and take note ?

Culture

When work is thus divided up all our faculties are no receiving a balanced nourishment, with the result the culture of a nation does not develop. Work does not only produce material results by its action but it also reacts on the worker himself which latter is perhaps the more important contribution of work, though it is the less in evidence. A child works out an arithmetical problem on a slate. Which is more important--the figure written on the slate or the mental exercise the child has had ? We may erase the work on the slate but the effect on the child, though unseen, is the more lasting and permanent. Similarly a carpenter designs and carves out a table. The table, though a thing of beauty, may be burnt while the development of the skill of the carpenter is a contribution to human progress. When he works to supply the needs of a community he reacts to the sense of art or beauty of his customers. This mental interaction between the producer and the customer results in the culture of a nation. Therefore, when work is divided up into its constituents placing an unbridgeable gulf between the producer and the consumer there can be no culture.

Cultural Work

It is only in this type that we find man at his best. What builds our character is not the great decisions of life but, the solutions we come to on small questions from day to day. Work absorbs most of our waking hours, and many of the problems connected with work and our dealings with our fellowmen are what determine the nature of our life. Therefore, it behoves us to sit up and make note of what our work makes of us.

If we analyse world history correctly, we shall find that civilizations were what they were because of the nature of the economic life of the people. Religion may have infused ideals, but work was the laboratory in which they were tried out. Therefore, work can play a much wider part in the development and growth of a nation than institutional or ceremonial religion, and yet how much conscious thought do leaders bestow on this formidable force ?

Properly directed, work affords facilities for the development of patience, perseverance, initiative, creativeness and originality and with it self-confidence, a sense of responsibility, accuracy and eye for detail and fine finish. Work is indeed a school for life. What food is to the body that work is to the faculties of men.

In both Capitalism and Communism, or as a matter of fact, in all large-scale production, the worker becomes a mere hand where head and heart are hardly exercised. In such economic organizations, culture has to be acquired outside work, so far as this is possible. Psychologically, this is an altogether artificial way of introducing culture into people who have been deprived of it through the natural channel of work. If this is to be rectified and work be made a means of obtaining culture, or in other words, a means of developing one's personality in all its three aspects of intelligence, character and artistic sense, then it is obvious that work cannot be planned and dictated from the centre, but must be decentralized. In this

undertaking of settling work back in its rightful place, the greatest difficulty is to overcome the ideas that have been instilled into the people by a false system of education on inculcating wrong standards of value. Inventions reflect the mental attitude with which problems are approached. In the last two centuries, machinery has been so devised as to concentrate power. We have to discountenance the use of such aids to production but in time we hope to substitute these by such tools as will lessen toil without concentrating power.

A greater achievement will be to combat the prevailing idea of work and instil into the people's mind that work must have as its end the well-being of the worker.

In work of the type ordained by nature, there is little use for so called leisure. People will find it much easier to spend their time working under congenial conditions than to use leisure profitably. To use leisure properly, one has to have a high degree of self-discipline which is one of the valuable products of true work. If in the course of our daily work we get ample room for the expression of our personality, then there will be no need for leisure. Of course there will be physical weariness which is healthy and which needs repose and relaxation in sleep and rest.

The moment we shift the emphasis from men to the material, we lose sight of the true function of work. If in a training institution young men spend their efforts in handling planes, hammer and chisel, they may waste wood but they are developing their muscles and skill. On the other hand, if they are made to feed sawing machines and to use their time in producing fine furniture by elaborate machinery, the emphasis is on material gain and not on the training. Is finely carved and finished furniture more important than the skill of the young men?

If we would save man from being degraded into a beast or an automaton, we have to face this situation and find a solution wherein work will cease to be a means of concentrating wealth and power but will become a means of distributing wealth. If this is achieved, there will not be the meteoric

careers of millionaires but we shall have a few more annas put into the pockets of the starving millions. This will increase the real wealth of the nation even if the money value be the same. If one lakh of rupees be concentrated in the hands of one person, the utility of that amount to the person who possesses it is as nothing as compared to the utility of the same one lakh, if it were distributed among one hundred thousand poor people and found them their daily bread. Today all work is directed towards producing the articles by which the largest profits can be made rather than to meeting man's primary requirements. Therefore, the poor man's needs are forgotten while there is a glut in the rich man's luxuries.

The idea that production should aim at supplying the needs of the worker, rather than at acquiring wealth or power is what underlies the programme of self-sufficiency, concentrating attention on industries that meet the primary needs of the people such as the production of articles of food, clothing and shelter.

From this point of view, any wrong use of work is sin and causes sorrow. Western organizations have looked upon work as a means of accumulating wealth, *i. e.* gathering in the available purchasing power from everybody to obtain control over the lives of men. This has naturally led to jealousies and violence. Can anything else be expected ? Unless we bestir ourselves and restore work to its proper place and man to his natural dignity and allow work to develop the masses, there is little hope of finding persons who will be able to bear responsibility and steer the helm of State to peace and prosperity.

Fatigue

If only we can detach ourselves from the turmoil of the modern world, we shall see clearly the havoc caused by this unnatural organization. If the urge is from within, his work should leave the worker a better man. Nature has so planned it that we improve by working if our work follows the natural order. For example, if a person who has the

talents of an artist is made to drive a car, it will be disastrous to the occupants of that car. He will only attain his full height if he is allowed to follow his natural inclination. We can tell by the effect work produces on a person if he is in his proper place. But when we look at the factory workers today what do we find ? Are they better human beings for their toil. On the contrary, we find a set of men and women whose life and energy have been sapped. The diagnosis is simple. There is a parasite feeding on their lives. They suffer from nervous disorder. Therefore, their method is unnatural and must lead ultimately to decay and destruction.

Division of Labour

No one will dispute the benefits to be obtained from division of labour which makes for specialization and efficiency. In our land, such specialization has held sway since time immemorial and it has even gone to seed having become hereditary and caste bound. Such an extreme has also led to difficulties and to a blind alley.

Under the plea of a wholesome division of labour, Western industrialists have broken up work into minute processes in such a way that work and drudgery have become synoymous terms associated with all the undesirable qualities of a curse.

Work, to be healthy and beneficial to the worker himself, apart from all considerations of the product, should have diversion and variety in sufficient measure in every sub-divided unit of it to prevent its becoming a strain on the nerves. There is, therefore, a limit beyond which division of labour cannot go without impugning its claims to wholesomeness.

The sub-divided unit must be as near a whole industry in itself as it possibly can be and not be reduced to a mere process of an industry. For instance, if carpentry is to be sud-divided, it may well be into wheel-wrights and oil-mill makers. These two are highly skilled departments, each

affording full scope for all the faculties of the artisans. The products also are complete marketable units. Instead of this if these crafts were further sub-divided into makers of spokes and felloes for the wheels on the one hand, and into hewers of wood on the other, it would be verging on drudgery. In leather craft, shoe-making or even specializing in chappals can be a healthy unit, while the mere cutting out of pieces of leather for the soles or the uppers of shoes cannot stand by itself as a healthy sub-division. In modern factories, such division of work into its minute processes has gone to such an extent as to limit a man's operation and attention to driving a nail or screwing on a nut bolt. To repeat such actions for eight hours a day, for 300 days in the year, is enough to cause a nervous strain which will send the worker to the mad house whatever may be the wages offered. Is it any wonder that in the most industrialized country in the world, in the U. S. A., more people suffer from nervous disorders than from all other forms of silments ? Man's constitution is not an inanimate machine. His system calls for a balance of operations which will exercise all his faculties. This condition can only be ensured by a wide enough unit of work.

Too small units, which are merely processes, are highly wasteful of man power as it puts workers out of action in a short time. A hardworking labourer is made a wreck by the time he reaches 45 years of age. But this wastage is shifted from the manufacturer to society by the wage system, rendering it possible for the industrialist to flourish in spite of this great loss in man power. The employer is totally un. concerned with the destruction his system of work causes. If one of his workers breaks down he is immediately discharged and a more youthful one is taken on. There is no love lost. The employer thinks no more of dispensing with a man who has wrecked his life in his service than of throwing away a smoked bit of a cigar. If anything, in casting off such worn out persons he stands to gain, as the younger man may bring in more energy at lower wages. There is no liability attaching to the employer for so drawing the life out of his men. Is

this not a callous waste of human faculties and life ? Any little higher wage such workers may appear to enjoy is but the realization or cashing in of the present value of their life after 45 years of age.

An excessive emphasis laid on wages, the product of the maintenance of a complex standard of life, ignoring the higher faculties of man, deprives man of the use of his free will and distorts his scale of values.

Under such circumstances the labourer's condition and work are like that of a bullock that drives an oil mill. The bullock being blindfolded does not see where or how it goes. Being controlled by its nose string, which is not even guided by a man but is only fixed to the machine itself, the animal turns eternally to the left, walking round and round all day within a circumscribed area, getting nowhere by its movement. No doubt the oilpresser gives it a little oilcake, with a complacent feeling of generosity, out of the lot that is made by the bullock's toil during the day. Our millhands fare no better. The joy of life and the healthy atmosphere of freedom are not for them. They are deprived of all opportunities of growth and development. This is not work as designed by nature. Hence it can only bring to the workers ruin and decay of their higher faculties. No money wage can compensate for that loss.

Leisure

While the manufacturers thus attempt to avoid for themselves toil and appropriate only the play and pleasure of work, our socialist friends dream of scooping out leisure from work. Properly understood, work of the right sort contains leisure or period of rest within itself. Leisure is an integral part of work just as rest is an essential component of a musical note. The two cannot be taken apart. Leisure is not a complete cessation of all activities. That will be death. Neither is leisure idle time. Idleness leads to deterioration. Beneficial leisure provides rest to one faculty, while other parts of our personality are being exercised. A mental worker at his desk needs an

active hobby like gardening to form a complement to the nervous strain caused by desk work. Any work to fulfil its proper function as ordained by nature, and not mutilated by man, must contain these complementary parts in itself.

Once I was discussing this aspect of work with an experienced engineer. He remarked that he could not conceive how there can be work and rest at the same time. To explain this theoretically it may be difficult, but to demonstrate it is easy, and so I suggested he should visit any artisan and analyse the proposition himself. He accepted this suggestion and took me to a school-master who eked out his living by making caps and requested me to point out wherein lay leisure and wherein diversion or rest in the making of caps.

The school-master, on being asked to show us how he set about the task of making a cap, brought out his work basket, took a piece of plush-like material and cut out an oval shaped piece. Then taking some red coloured lining cloth cut out also a similar piece. To this he attached some pieces of old newspaper and stitched some floral designs with the sewing machine, and then sewed this on to the plush top. After that with punches he fixed some eyelets through these to serve as ventilating holes on the top of the cap. While the master was busy with his manifold operations, I was explaining to the engineer that the obtaining of the raw material presented certain problems for the master to solve in international trade, as the plush came from Italy and the red lining cloth from Japan; that when the master was occupied with the cutting operations with his scissors one faculty of his was functioning, when he was sewing on the floral design the artistic faculty, when he was punching on the eyelets for ventilators still another part of his nervous system was called into action diverting his energies from the artistic employment of faculty which was now having its rest.

While we were talking about these matters the master's little child cried in the backyard of the house. Promptly the

master got up, left his work and ran to the child, picking it up scolded his wife roundly for allowing the child to cry while visitors were in the house. While the master was having the unholy row with his spouse, I said to the engineer, "There, now he is having his diversion, relaxation and recreation." The engineer burst out into a laughter and got up to go saying "I fully grasp your meaning."

Life, when it is allowed to run its natural course, is resourceful enough to provide for itself all it needs without any further conscious effort on our part.

Such then is work and its function in life. It makes it possible for man to use his faculties and develop himself during his own life-time and leave behind him his personality indelibly stamped on the product of his work, that which is the best part of him.

An artist transfers his sense of beauty to a piece of canvas and leaves behind a masterpiece for posterity to cherish and admire. While the artist was dabbing bits of paint on to the canvas it must have seemed hard work—drudgery--of days and days. But such labour had to go into the making of a masterpiece. A lithograph may avoid such drudgery and hardwork but its products are as wastepaper when compared with the work of the real artist.

Even before the work of the picture is launched on, hours of hard work were necessary for the skillful mixing of paints and blending of colours. The colours used at the Ajanta Caves must have taken decades to evolve to have attained such perfection as to have lasted all these many centuries. The artists of those times did not grudge the labour on it; and posterity pays its obeisance to them for their peerless gift. Those artists did not devise ways and means of obtaining the effect without the labour involved. Nature is a hard taskmaster. It never awards perfection to grudgingly rendered work. If we wish to attain perfection we must put whole work; no time serving labour, which satisfies only the passing moment, will answer the purpose. Nature refuses to be browbeaten or cheated.

Similarly, a beautiful emblem of devoted labour has been bequeathed to generations yet unborn by those creators who hewed out of living rock the whole edifice of a temple at Ellora. The sense of proportion and symmetry are not the result of an attempt to shirk work nor the outcome of seeking shortcuts so as to avoid labour. It is the product of an opportunity squarely faced. Labour properly directed blesses those who work and also the products of their labour.

To give but one more example of faithful work well done there is a steel pillar near the Kutub Minar at Delhi bearing an ancient inscription. This pillar has stood in the open, exposed to sun and rain, heat and cold for centuries on end, yet there is not a speck of rust on it. The composition of this alloy has confounded the best of modern metallurgists. The iron-smiths of old, who cast this wonderfal pillar, did not seek any shortcuts to produce this effect. They did not shirk the routine labour and discipline involved in manufacturing such metal. They took work as nature meant it to be. Hence we have this monument declaring that fact to us today. Thus does work confer immortality on faithful labour.

If we are to derive full benefit from work as designed by nature we have to keep as close as we can to the simple original form of work without dividing it up into its ineffective parts.

Drudgery

The unpleasant part of work is not necessarily drudgery. What makes for drudgery is the lack of interest in work. The same operations may be drudgery to one and a soul absorbing work to another. To a paid gardener his digging up the flower beds or watering them may be drudgery, but to the garden-lover such work will provide the outlet for his sense of beauty. To the woman whose heart is in dance, tea and cock-tail parties, looking after her child will be drudgery, while to the lover of the home the child provides the pivot round which her

universe will revolve. Some claim that drudgery may be done away with by resorting to machine production. In fact machines are the tools with which work is split up into its component parts, making it impossible for the labourers to take an intelligent interest in their operations, and hence such machines create drudgery. A man detailed out to perform but one operation all the 8 hours of the day has the quintessence of drudgery. In jails, where the philosophy of work is pure and simple punishment, even artistic work such as carpet weaving is reduced to drudgery.

Then how can we dispense with drudgery ? Only by creating an interest in the work and not by resorting to machinery. A farmer, who has been educated to realise the social aspect of his contribution and is enabled to see in every furrow he makes the formation of life-giving channels which will carry food and hope to starving fellowmen, will take pleasure and pride in the role he plays in society, and obtaining satisfaction to his soul will put his heart into his work. No tractor can do that. This is the only way to counteract drudgery.

Self-Sufficiency

Our study of work, so far, shows that splitting work into its component parts leads to maldistribution of wealth and power and results in violence which crystallises in the forms of slavery, serfdom, capitalism, imperialism etc. The introduction of machine has only intensified the evil. Therefore, the salvation lies in a community providing wholesome work to its constituent elements and by that means it will not only obtain its material requirements but will also be building up a culture all its own. The small units of work will enable its workers to comprehend the full implications of their activity and thus dispel drudgery.

Basic Education

It may not be out of place at this stage to point out in passing that the element of work which contributes to the

growth of personality and the formation of culture are the creative and educative part of work. When we yoke the education of children to this aspect of work we evolve what is come to be known as the Basic Education.

Conclusion

To-day, by the process of industrialization and standardization an over--emphasis is placed on material production, ignoring the fact that work is essential not merely to provide our material needs but also to direct our personality and character in desired channels. By this omission human progress is being checked. We may be gaining the whole material world but we are undoubtedly losing our soul. Is it not time we called a halt and took stock and adjusted our mode of living and working to cultivate that which is highest and noblest in us, instead of rushing headlong in the pursuit of momentary pleasures and ending our days as mere animals ?

II

What is Progress ?

The idea of spreading large scale industries seems to be associated with being up-to-date, scientific and progressive. Correspondents often harp on this and enquire if the discouragement of textile mills and banning of rice mills are not putting the clock back. Hence it is profitable to spend a few moments to ponder over what is progress and what is scientific.

Today, the public may be made to believe anything provided they are told often enough what to believe. Propaganda has become a science and is ousting all individual thought. Even education in our colleges and schools is taking the form of promulgation of undigested half truths. When rightly understood, science is the basis of all village industries, and village industries afford the fullest scope for scientific research and application.

What is Science ?

Science is not the creation of man. Nature works in well-defined grooves according to immutable laws. When man understands these laws and reduces them to a system of knowledge, we call it science. It follows, therefore, that any course of action to be termed scientific should conform to nature in all its bearings and where we deviate from nature, to that extent we are unscientific. Man may understand vaguely the lines on which nature works, and make use of that partial knowledge for his own purpose, deviating by so doing from the course ordained by nature. Such deviation will lead ultimatety to his own destruction because he himself is a product of nature. Destruction so caused may be at his own hands or through mal-application of a partial understanding.

Progress

Progress signifies both the search after knowledge and truth as found in nature and its application to satisfy human needs. In the measure in which we are able to pull alongside nature's dictates we shall be progressing in the right direction. But in so far as we are pulling against the course of nature, we shall be creating violence and destruction which may take the form of social conflicts, personal ill-health and the spread of anti-social feelings, such as hatred, suspicion and fear. From these symptoms we shall know whether we are progressing scientifically or not. If our course of action leads to goodwill, peace and contentment we shall be on the side of progress, however little the material attainments may be, and if it ends in dissatisfaction and conflict we shall be retrogressing, however much in abundance we may possess material things.

Economic Activity

The activity of man to satisfy his elementary needs must, therefore, not merely produce the material goods but should also be conducive towards growth and development of his own personality. When a man eats food it not only satisfies his palate but it replenishes the waste products of his body, maintains it in good condition and allows for growth and further development. If the food that he ate only satisfied the palate without contributing to the two other aspects of the needs, it will be of no use. If a person drank water sweetened by saccharin all the time, however much he may like the sweet taste, he cannot enjoy good health and strength as all the elements necessary for his body building, maintenance, replacement of wastage are not present in proper proportions. Taste is a good thing but it is not all. The main function that food plays is performed after it has left our palate. It is the manner in which the food gets assimilated in the body that is going to tell ultimately. Similarly, work also must not be judged by the outward appearance,

nor by the quantity of things produced. Work should develop the human personality and be as food to all human faculties. When we, through greed or false notions or a wrong sense of proportion, interfere with nature hoping to obtain short-cuts, we generally end up by being wasteful. Nature does not believe in short--cuts. The mills of God grind slowly. Hence in our hurry, we often bring destruction on our heads and we imagine such quick results to be a sign of progress.

Food

For instance, nature packs up all nutritious articles, *e. g.* foodgrains, fruits, eggs, etc. carefully in such a way that the ingredients are kept intact and in proper proportion as will be necessary for the users. But when we destroy nature's packing we create counter influences which also destroy the value of food.

Rice, to cite one example, is packed up well in the husk, coated with bran and equipped with pericarp and the grain. When this is to be eaten all that we have to do is to dehusk the rice. Such dehusked rice, because of its nutritive nature, will be attacked by weevils, vermins, rats, etc. Therefore, when we require rice we should dehusk what is needed at the moment and keep the rest as paddy. Then alone we get the whole benefit from eating the cereal. But man in his hurry, uses a rice-mill, and as he cannot store rice when dehusked he proceeds to polish it and takes away all its nutritious elements. By so doing he no doubt increases the storage properties of rice but at the cost of its food value. This is an instance in which human interference with nature is thoroughly unscientific and injures man. Hence, rice mills are against progress and however skilfully the mechanism may have been devised, it is unscientific in the true sense.

Husbanding of Resources

A scientific use of resources should mean that we get the fullest benefit out of what we find around us. Man,

in his eagerness to use mechanical device, is often irrational in the utilization of resources. For instance, if paper is to be made out of bamboo by the simple hand-process, we do not use bamboos cut fresh from the forest. The bamboos in the forest when they are first cut are used in various ways for toofing, for being made into mats, sieves, baskets and other household articles and then, when they have served their term as such, the broken and used up bamboo pieces are converted into pulp and paper is made from it.

But the so called scientific industrialist cannot afford to work on this basis as his machines are to be kept going all the time; so in his hurry, he has to get the tender bamboos from the forest and feed them into his mills to be converted into paper. For this purpose, he has to cultivate forests of bamboos, directing human energy into lines which were totally unnecssary in the former case. Hence the mill process of making paper, as we have shown, is thoroughly unscientific and wasteful in the utilization of natural resources,

Similarly, if we have to utilize as food the nutritious elements found in nature, we may get gur from palm trees that grow wild on uncultivable lands and obtain the whole benefit of the sap, minus the water which it contains, along with sugar in a digestible form, and various minerals and salts.

But man in his anxiety to use his knowledge puts up sugar mills, converts good lands. which may be used for cultivation of cereals, into sugar-cane growing lands and then the sugar-cane is converted into sugar, wasting bulk of the minerals and salts in the molasses which are thrown out as unfit for human consumption and from which he prepares rum and gin to poison the people and to acquire for himself the money they possess.

Even if sugar be required to be produced by hand the *rab* prepared from palm juice can be centrifuged, and having obtained the sugar, the molasses left can now be converted into edible gur rich in minerals and salts. Molasses produced from the sugar mills, as they are affected by the use of sulphur

compounds in the processes, are not fit for human consumption and have to be wasted or converted into intoxicating drinks as stated above.

Here again we see that sugar mills are thoroughly unscientific and wasteful of human resources. They, like the rice mills, are only to satisfy the greed for accumulation of wealth by individuals at the cost of nutritious food products found in nature.

Utilization of Resources

In our quest for ways and means of satisfying our needs we have to take into consideration the resources available to us and make the best use of them possible. It will be unscientific to use coal for fuel where it is not available and where crude oil can be easily obtained. Similarly where coal is available and where no firewood is available it would be senseless to bring firewood from distant places for purposes of fuel. In the same manner, where human energy is available cheaply and in abundance, it will be irrational to obtain other motive forces from distant places. In India, where people are suffering from unemployment and lack of occupation, to produce our needs to resort to mill production, which ultimately spreads unemployment, is unthinkable. From this point of view, hand spinning, however slow it may be, is scientific and in line with human progress while textile mills are irrational and spell ruin to the people.

Perversion of Taste

Through propaganda people's natural taste is perverted. They are made to believe smell and colour are to be avoided. They may be taught soon to hold that paper roses are better than natural ones as the latter do not "stink". The best example of this type of perversion for business purposes is the present drive to popularize *Vanaspati Ghee*. Here the mill prostitutes scientific knowledge to deodorize and decolourize the natural oil, to substitute nutritionally inferior oils for the traditionally used ones, to solidify vegetable oils while lowering or destroying their digestibility. They render all this

disservice at an enhanced price. Is this not taking liberties with nature, science and progress? Do we not deserve it if in return nature visits us with blindness, loss of powers of growth and reproduction? This is industrialization in all its nakedness. Such is what passes for science and progress today, heralding their advent by highly paid advertisements, exploiting the ignorance of the people.

Machines and Tools

This does not mean that there is no room for machines. Where standardization and regimentation of labour are called for, the use of largescale machines in indicated. Where precision tools are to be made and standardized articles are essential, then production of these through machines will be necessary. But in consumption goods duplication and standardization are not of the very essence of their being. A comb may be made of horn by hand; but no two combs so made will be precisely alike. There is no purpose in standardizing such articles. Hence making combs from plastics is not called for. Similarly there are many articles in common usage which do not call for standardization. On the other hand, most consumption goods call for the catering of individual need and taste. In such cases, only cottage and village industries can answer the purpose. When a man has to be fitted with a pair of shoes, the shoes have to be made for his feet, even so as to conform to any deformities that he may possess. Such making of shoes for a particular person' feet is scientific and will help the shoe-maker to use his resourcefulness and ingenuity to meet the need and thus help him to develop his capacity, while standardized shoes, though they may produce the articles in abundance, can not be said to be thoroughly scientific in so far as they are not calculated to fit any particular foot exactly. So largescale production of shoes, as compared with the work of the *mochi*, is again unscientific and so against progress.

Violence and Destruction

In the last two generations we have known the results of mechanical production of standardized goods. The raw materials are needed in large quantities and they have to be collected

from the four corners of the world and the finished products have to be assured of a definite market, and for these the ocean routes have to be kept clear and safe. These conditions have brought about the two catastrophic global wars. In the course of these wars, much of the human production and skill has gone into destruction. Any war is definitely against progress, it turns men back to the jungle and so can be termed to be unscientific Since our activities to satisfy our human needs have culminated in these global wars, they are unscientific and retrogressive.

Conclusion

Therefore, when we attempt to plan production in our country to satisfy our needs, we have to be careful to choose the most scientific method and the most progressive ways. We must remember, production, of a multiplicity of goods is not synonymous with progress nor is destruction a sign of science. Attainment of quick results is not conducive to the production of culture. Nature works in mysterious ways and demands its own time. No man in a hurry can be either progressive or scientific. We need patience and we need a ballast to our lives. This we can find only through satisfying our needs by village industries and decentralized production.

Largescale industries may be used as a necessary evil as has already been referred to above, in the production of tools and machines needed for cottage and village industries and provision of basic raw materials such as sulphuric acid, steel, etc. It can also provide natural monopolies, such as communications, means of transport, public utilities like water and power. Anything more than this will spell ruin and destruction to humanity. It calls for great care and forethought to be to able to judge. However, we cannot resort to centralized methods of production in the satisfaction of our daily needs. Wherever there is a doubt, it is safer to fall back on the decentralized methods of production. Hence, we hold that the proper application of science and the way to real progress lies in resorting to village and cottage industries to satisfy our daily needs.

III

The Gandhian Approach to Economics

Anything Gandhian must necessarily be a derivative of Truth and Non-violence. Therefore, Gandhian economics must be economics purged of untruth and violence. Hence to study this subject we shall have to pause awhile to search our present organizations for manifestations of untruth and violence in our economic dealings with our fellows.

Gandhiji is not interested in a purely academic treatment of a subject. At every turn he is anxious to see how our action tells on our neighbours. He does not look at life in watertight compartments but as one whole. Therefore, the moral and social implications of economic activity cannot be considered apart from economics.

As every schoolboy has learnt, economics is a science which deals with how man goes about to satisfy his needs. This activity will bring man into frequent touch—co-operation or confiict—with his fellows. Gandhian economics will strive to enunciate principles which, when carefully followed, will allow man to satisfy his needs without injuring his neighbours; and at best, while helping his fellowmen.

Our considerations cannot cease there. We have also to follow how the man reacts to his own work. Our daily round of duties is as much a part of ourselves as our physical body. Man expresses himself by his work and at the same time builds his personality by his acts whether such acts be classified moral, political, social or economic. Hence what occupations we follow is not merely a means of earning our daily bread but is a form of a very effective method of adult educa on.

Taken in this setting, the standards of value we use cannot be purely materialistic. They have to measure the repercussions of man's activity in the different spheres of life; which will naturally mean that money consideration can never have the final word in deciding the questions that face us.

Beyond the pale of human society are our mute brethren who minister to our needs—animals, birds etc.—which have also to be dealt with consideration. The land we draw our sustenance from, the water, sunlight, air and the rest of the physical world claim our attention and regard while we strive to satisfy our needs. If we fail to consider these factors, nature will retaliate with violence in the form of pain, disease and death.

Taking all these factors into consideration man has to pick his way through skillfully so as to obtain the greatest benefit to himself with the least harm to others and the minimum of disturbance of the natural order. The ideal position would be where man works in complete alignment with Nature. The bird eats a fruit and flies away. In the normal course it passes out the seeds, perhaps miles away from the place where it found the fruit. Thus while it was only satisfying its primary need of hunger it also helped the vegetable kingdom to broadcast the seeds—it provided the transport In this manner the bird and the tree are co-operating to mutual benefit in fulfilling the ways of nature. This system alone eschews violence; it ensures smooth working and makes for harmony. Such should be the economic activity of man also if it is to bring about goodwill and peace among men and lead to the real progress of mankind.

Keeping this approach in mind we shall have to examine the prevalent systems of economic production, exchange and consumption to see how far they are capable of answering these requirements and where they have to be abandoned, amended or accepted.

Production

Until about two hundred years ago, up to the advent of what has come to be called "The Industrial Revolution", the whole world was engaged in producing goods with the use of small tools, by the application of large amount of human skill and labour to raw materials available in the vicinity of the producer. Generally the products were meant for local consumption. Violence had no integral part in this form of economic activity. Units of production were generally small, owned by individuals or small groups in partnership.

Centralized Industries :—The Industrial Revolution brought a great many changes in the organization of such units. Much capital was sunk in bringing into industrial use many of the inventions to produce standardized articles on a mass scale. This brought a new orientation of economics mainly if not solely, based on material considerations.

Guarding Ocean Routes :—Expensive plant and machinery were located in one place and raw materials from far off places were brought to feed these machines. The goods produced were again shipped to the four corners of the earth to find markets. These two new functions—of securing raw materials and finding markets—raised the need for the Army and Navy to guard the ocean routes.

Raw Materials.—Later it was found that to work these machines economically they would have to be worked throughout the year steadily. This meant the machine owners had to have control over the life and work of the raw material producers to guarantee a steady stream of grist to the mills.

Markets:— In the same way, to ensure the disposal of the enormous output made possible by this mode of production, it was convenient to have the possible markets also under control. These two considerations gave rise to the modern conception of politico-economic imperialism founded on violent

conquest and political subjection of unindustrialized countries misnamed backward countries.

Thus it will be seen that the introduction of centralized method of production has made the industrial nations a menace to the freedom-loving peoples of the world.

Armaments:— Owing to the need of violence, basic to this method of production, the manufacture of armaments for mass slaughter—called global wars—became the theme of scientists and inventive engineers. This, in a system based on competition, brought about the race in armaments.

Glorification of Violence:— Generally speaking, the man in the street is peace loving. He will not enlist to kill others. Hence, if the Forces were to have recruits for international murder, such acts have to be glorified or deified. To meet this situation a social set of values was evolved giving enviable status to members of these Forces. This brought into the service of the manufacturers deception or untruth.

Indispensability of Untruth:— Then to cultivate the markets to use up the articles put out by the factories, advertisements were designed with little regard to truth.

At the time of actual conflict, to set one naion against another, a whole range of propaganda material was perpared to spread hatred and suspicion, poisoning the international atmosphere.

Ahimsak Swadeshi:– The above brief survey of the changes brought about in international relations by the introduction of centralized industries shows that violence and untruth have captured pivotal positions in economic life of the people when they depend on these industries for satisfying their daily needs. If we do not wish to be parties to such violence and untruth then we should dissociate ourselves from such industries by neither supplying them with raw materials nor using their finished products. In thus non-co-operating in their activities we are not 'putting the clock back' as it is usually alleged. We are seeking to apply moral and spiritual values in economics.

Exchange

With mass production the problem of disposal of goods assumes formidable proportions. Long distances, strange customs stood in the way. These had to be overcome.

Merchant Shipping:— The most convenient method adopted was to own and control the shipping so that their freight may be well managed to avoid wastage. When outward bound the ships can take finished goods and may not return empty but bring in raw materials. This shipping needed the strong support of a Navy.

Trusteeship:— Similarly, the strange countries could be 'civilized' to come into line with modes known to the manufacturing countries. Nations are not in the habit of changing their customs overnight. Hence the need for 'peaceful penetration' schemes, talk of guardianship of 'backward races', trusteeship of 'undeveloped' areas etc. These programmes were put into execution by strong armed forces against the will of weaker nations.

Place of Money:— If markets are at great distances then problems of currency arise. The whole of this mass production and exchange will come to a standstill if commodities were to exchange for commodities.. This gave rise to the development of money exchange to such a degree that money has now assumed the role of an end in itself, eclipsing the real value of commodities. Production for consumption has changed its character and has become production for exchange.

A Smokescreen:—A farmer, whose cow produces milk, will sell every drop of it without retaining any for the calf or his child, because he gets money for it! The real consideration that should guide his decision should be the nutrition afforded by the milk. By depriving his children of a wholesome food product he is cashing in the future health of his own children. Emphasis on money has befogged his vision.

Consumption

Mass production takes place without any relation to demand. Hence, periodically a glut :of goods comes about. This is:cleared by violence. By untruthful advertisement a demand is created for the existent supply. People are made to want a number of things of which they do not stand in need. It is like drugged cigarettes given out free to create the habit. When the habit is formed, however illegal it may be, the market is assured. That is all that is required by the manufacturer.

Unintelligent Fashions:— At present, in our country, great efforts are being put forth to accustom people to using artificial ghee made out of vegetable oil. The oil mills produce oils with tendency to turn rancid which they deodorize, decolorize and hydrogenate. These processes destroy the usual colour and smell people have traditionally associated with pure, cold--pressed, vegetable oil. They also destroy the nutritive value of natural oil. To remedy the defects of the mill oil they try to change the taste of the people by advertising the new product as being the best to use. To make up for the nutritive values lost they add fish fat, unknown to the customers, but content themselves by a mere statement that the oil has been 'vitaminized'. Thus the oilmen are done out of their occupation and the consumers not only cheated of their food products but mulcted of their purchasing power.

Thus mass production tries to control demand by setting up fashions even injurious to the consumers. Often people are led away and they are made to part with their purchasing power in exchange for trinkets at a time when they may be facing starvation. In our land, the village people have very little financial sense and hardly know how to lay out their annual income. In these circumstances the ways chosen by centralized industries to empty the pockets of our poor people verge on fraud and loot.

Self-Sufficiency :— At least all primary needs of food, clothing and shelter must be met by local supply. The demand

itself should not be intensified at the cost of real need. The demand for white polished rice or pure sugar can only be satisfied at the cost of nutritive values. When local production takes care of local demand such ill-conceived demands will fall to a minimum.

Distribution of Wealth

The fabulous wealth of a few at the top in India and the grinding poverty of the rest of the nation is a well known factor. This situation places in the hands of a few the right of employment if our industries are organized on the availability of capital. Centralized industries thus tend to create an impossible situation in a country already facing perennial unemployment and underemployment on a mass scale. The situation in a country where labour is plentiful, calls for an organization which will make the best of this source of wealth. Cottage industries distribute wealth, while centralized industries concentrate wealth; therefore we have to go in for the former and not for the latter.

Prices and Costs of the Product:— The industrialist's interest lies mainly in profit. Very often the prices of his products are fixed by the competition of other manufacturers. That being so if he has to increase his profit he cannot do so by increasing the price. The only way open to him is to lower the cost. The cost is made up of overhead charges, labour wages and raw materials. The first and the third also, being subject to market conditions, have no elasticity in them. Wages, being determined by contract with persons whose bargaining power is low, are easily assailed. The result is that wages usually have to bear the brunt of any increase in profits on lowering of prices. Therefore, control of prices at a low level in a standardized article of mass production will generally affect the profit only if the wages are also fixed.

On the other hand the cost of the product in a decentralized industry is made up only of the cost of raw materials. The difference between such cost and the price of the product

represents the return to the workers. Hence fixing the price of such an article will normally lower the return the worker gets.

In our country, where wages are already low, such price fixing in largescale industries may have the effect of lowering the profits of the manufacturer which may be desirable, but fixing prices at the same low level of competeting products of decentralized industries may result in lowering the already low return the worker gets. In other words, price fixing in largescale industries may restrict accumulation of wealth, which is good, and price fixing for similar village made articles will restrict distribution of wealth, which is bad. Hence our objective for village products should be to raise their prices.

Transport

Where mass production is the order of the day, transport becomes an important factor. There are different results obtainable from good transport. It may drain the country of all products if no safety valve is allowed for and we resort to quick moving means of transport such as Railway, Motor lorries etc. Movement of goods in competition may also lead to violence. If such transport systems are restricted to perishable articles like fruits and fish and are again confined to only proved surpluses of such commodities, then they may be functioning in their proper field. But today, irrational movement of goods has created such a phenomenon that in fruit growing areas the local population gets next to nothing of fruits in their daily diet.

In some localities, like Anand district in Gujarat, which produces milk, Government had granted sole buying rights to exporters to Bombay, which created milk scarcity in the producing areas themselves. These are maladies caused by man's greed made possible by the quick transport with refrigeration facilities. As long as man's nature remains selfish it would be foolish to furnish facilities which are more open to misuse than to rational use. Transport is a double-edged sword which can only be properly wielded by the exercise of

self-discipline and self.control. In an economy based on self-indulgence and self-gratification such instruments have proved to function anti-socially.

Trade Implications:—Buses etc. provide a wide market for dealers in petroleum, oil and such imported products. Therefore, the bulk of the running expenses forms a steady drain on the purchasing power in a country like ours which has to import even the vehicles. Thus the main part of freight and fares paid for such transport provides employment to foreigners, while it destroys the chances of local slow moving transport, like the horse or bullock drawn vehicles, which are benefactors of many local side industries. In transport of timber, which requires time to season, there is no functional benefit derived by employing quick moving transport.

In an agricultural country, animal transport fulfils the requirements of the cycle of nature and fits into the economy at every point.

Standards of Value

We have already seen how money standard, used without restriction, leads to the growth of violence, the introduction of untruth in commerce and the irrational use of our productive capacity. While the country is facing death from starvation its resources are being concentrated on growing tobacco ! In a poor country, living on the very verge of subsistence, the value that we must adopt must be human need and nutrition rather than exchange value.

Price Mechanism:— Whatever prices may be offered in the market for eggs, for instance, an egg is an egg both for the prince and the pauper nutritionally. Any transfer of an egg from a starving pauper to a prince, just because of the price offered, is a social crime of the worst type. A great deal of modern commerce is based on the price mechanism, pure and simple, without any regard for the needs of the buyer.

Artificial Demand:—Material welfare is not the end of life. Therefore, creating a multiplicity of wants tends to

confuse issues and lay emphasis on things the manufacturers wish to palm off to the public by introducing new modes and fashions. This will result in cultural malformation because of the false values set up to create the demand so as to clear the stock on hand.

Other Standards :— Our life should be regulated by various standards of value calculated to promote the manifold aspects of human life—moral values, cultural values, artistic values and physical and nutritional values. When properly directed, life will run in channels which will enrich human existence by following Nature's cycle instead of short circuiting it and producing violence as a result of it.

Function of Work

In the natural order, we observed earlier, work furthers the course of Nature. In the example cited above, the bird has no consciousness of helping Nature, when it passes out the seed of the fruit it has eaten, miles away from the parent tree, that it is in any way obliging Nature. It functions normally, and Nature has designed its normal function to fulfil itself. In the same way man's activity should follow the course of Nature if it is to be of any advantage to the whole creation.

The Objective:— The purpose of work does not end with its attaining the immediate objective. When a carpenter makes a carved table with various patterns designed by him, he no doubt produces a beautiful piece of furniture. But the major part of his work, like the base of an iceberg, lies under the surface. While working at this artistic material his imagination has been exercised along with his thinking powers, his muscles have attained greater accuracy in handling his tools, his sense of the beautiful would have developed simultaneously. Thus the carpenter would be a superior personality after executing his design materially than before launching on that project.

Promotion of Culture:— The circle does not end there. By providing the public with objects on which they can exercise their judgement and pronounce it by the way their patronage is given, the worker helps in the development of their taste and by his further efforts to give form to their desires, he co-operates in developing a national culture. Such are the far reaching consequences of an artisan's work-a-day routine acts. These are completely vulgarized by standardized mass production which only caters for the immediate and that again by ignoring the demands of custom. Thus it occasions an incalculable loss to the progress of mankind.

Development of Personality:— Decentralized industries have no specialized staff to deal with their multifarious problems. The artisan himself has to study the sources of raw materials, the demand of the public, and devise ways and means of meeting the needs of the situation. This struggle develops the personality of the worker, while the centralized methods present the labourer with single cut and dried operations which call for no initiative on their part—theirs but pull levers and join the broken threads. This is a pure form of drudgery which strains our nervous system. Man is not a mechanical device designed to carry out an isolated operation. He has to exercise all the faculties Nature has generously endowed him with. If he fails to use them he is doomed to deterioration. Hence decentralized industries afford facilities for the full development of the human being.

When a person goes all out to indulge his senses there is no growth. Growth is a product of the regulated exercise of powers we are endowed with. It calls for self-discipline and self-control. The individual artisan cannot exist without constantly weighing the probabilities of his acts and order them in such a way as to achieve his purpose.

The Incentive:— Competiton governs the world of centralized industries. When this is let loose it ushers in the jungle law and ultimately produces destruction. Man is a social animal. His development can be conditioned healthily only by co-operation governing his mutual relationships in his

pursuits to satisfy his primary needs. Similarly, profit motives, when uncontrolled, lead to fratricidal wars.

Education:— In these ways the creative element in work can be properly utilized to educate man to grow to the full stature he is capable of. It is here that we find the roots of the 'Basic Education System' sponsored by Mahatma Gandhi. This System aims at harnessing the educative possibilities of man's normal activities to satisfy his everyday needs to the chariot of progress from the cradle to the grave.

Democracy:— In the political world we crave for freedom for the individual and democracy for society. This can only be achieved by training every member of society to assume full responsibility for his actions. No field is better suited for this purpose than the economic arena where a man has every opportunity to develop himself through decentralized industries as we have observed in the foregoing paragraphs. Therefore, as a training ground for preparing the individual for Swaraj, there is no instrument as potent as the industries working on decentralized basis.

The centralized industries require regimented labour which has no use for individual judgement. The bulk of the workers have only to carry out instructions. This crushes any personality that may already be there and so forms an ideal training ground for pure dictatorships.

Our Experience:— The Western nations, which have been pursuing their economic life harnessed to centralized industries, have been declaring from housetops that they are democracies in political life. Yet when the emergency arose at the time of world war II, they quickly plumped for autocracy and thorough going dictatorships, because they realized that their much vaunted paper democracy of peace time cannot weather the storm of war. This was not a matter of coincidence or chance. Communist Russia, imperialistic Great Britain, industrialized America, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy and expansionits Japan found themselves strange bedfellows under dictatorships, under belligerency. This state of affairs was the natural consummation of centralized industries in the economic sphere. The

sheep's clothing of professed democracy dropped off and the wolves were revealed in all their ugliness of dictatorship for which type of Government the population of these countries, through decades, had been prepared to offer unthinking obedience rather than to express their disciplined will through their representatives.

The Lesson:—Let, therefore, India beware. We clamour for independence and democracy and we also hear loud voices calling for industrialization of the country by adopting centralized methods of production. Do we realize the contradiction in these two demands ? We can not have decentralization in politics—which is democracy—and yet have centralization in the economic sphere which is unadulterated dictatorship. We must be sure of the destination to which our road will lead us to before we undertake the arduous journey. Are we prepared to learn from the experience of the Western nations and of Japan ? If we benefit by the tragedies of two Global Wars. India may yet lead the world to peace and non-violence.

Place of Centralized Industries

Our foregoing analysis has shown that as far as our country is concerned and under conditions prevailing at present, the only form of economic organization that is desirable, is the decentralized system giving the individual citizen full scope for his development without injuring his fellow men.

It may be asked 'Is there no place in this system for centralized industries at all ?' We meet our requirements for the well being of our bodies both by the utilization of staple foods and poisons. The former we take in a generous measure in the form of food as dictated by our sense of taste. When serious pathological conditions demand it we also partake of poisons, such as quinine etc. But this latter is taken not by being made into *laddus* weighing several ounces, but in minute pills of few grains as prescribed by the physician. Similarly, we may, for certain key industries, natural monopolies, and public utilities, use centralized methods and largescale manufacture, in spite of the evil effects they may produce in society. While

doing so we have to sterilize them completely of all profit incentive by socializing such industries and running them on a service basis, being fully conscious all the time that they are allowed to exist by sufferance and as a matter of compromise. This course will put us on our guard and we shall be ever vigilant to curb any evil manifestation at the very outset.

Conclusion

Thus the Gandhian approach to Economics is through the avenue of Truth and Non-violence. Its goal is not pure material benefit but the advancement of humanity on its road to progress by strengthening the character and the individual development of personality of every single person engaged in such activity. No one's gain should be anybody's loss—financial, physical, moral or spiritual. If there is to be a choice, the preference should fall on the eternal constituents of man rather than on the material.

At a time when humanity is groaning under the crushing burden of wars and struggling with the nightmare of a terrifying future, the course indicated by the unerring fingers should come as a solace to all who seek happiness, real prosperity and peace and goodwill among nations.

PRINCIPAL,
GANDHIGRAM.
EXTENSION TRAINING CENTRE.

IV

The Cow Economy

There is a good deal of talk today about protecting the cow from the slaughter house. It is good that people are becoming conscious of the great evil that indiscriminate slaughter of cattle has brought to our country. On the purely short sighted view, the need of milk in a vegetarian country being important, gives a premier place to the cow as a feeder of the nation. Apart from that it also provides the bullock, which is the motive power with which the farmer produces from the land. The importance of this aspect of the question has been fully realised in conferring divinity on the cow and raising cow slaughter to the level of a religious question. However, because of fanaticism, the very same zeal on the one side has created cussedness on the other side and we often find conflict between different sections of the population centred around cow slaughter. Therefore it now becomes necessary to ascertain exactly the place of the cow in India and give it a national approach.

With an artisan the tool that he uses becomes almost an object of worship. In fact, in India we have a definite festival "Sastra Puja" devoted to this ceremony. Man recognises his economic dependence on the means of production. Just as an artisan depends on his tools, similarly the farmer depends on the cow and if we may extend the economic sphere, we may say the cow, being the means of producing food, becomes the centre of the economic organization of man, especially in an agricultural country like India.

Apart from this aspect, when we look upon the cow as the producer of the bullock, the importance of the cow is enhanced. She now represents the centre of our economy. We may call our economic organization, where the cow contributed towards motive power, transport, food production, etc. as a "Cow-centred Economy" in the same manner as England and other European Couutries were, not long ago, hosse-centred economies.

During the last century England drifted from being a horse-centred economy into a coal-centred economy and from being a coal-centred economy she is fast moving into an oil-centred economy. These stages are very important to notice as the fate of the world itself depends on the source from which we obtain our power.

In the cow and the horse-centred economies we have unlimited sources as we could breed as many bullocks and horses as we needed and, therefore, there being no restriction on the amount available, it does not arouse anybody's greed or jealousy; but coal and petrol being limited in their supply and quantity, uses of such sources of power lead to friction amongst nations as the source dries up. It is now well recognised that these global wars are in no small measure due to different nations seeking to get control over oil fields. Hence the coal and oil economies lead to conflict amongst nations. Unlike these two, the cow and horse economies are, comparatively, peaceful economies. Therefore, in a wider sense we may say that when we break through a cow-centred economy we are really causing cow slaughter, *i. e.* in other words, when our actions are inimical to the existence of the cow-centred economy, we are not in the company of the protectors of the cow. For example, when we use coal and oil as our source of motive power we are really banning the cow from our economy. When we are making asphalted roads, which are not in the interest of animal traction, we are also guilty of breaking through the cow-centred organization. This aspect of the question is much more vital to us than the mere slaughter of the four legged and two horned animal.

We wonder how many of our friends, who stand up against cow slaughter, can show their hands clean of bovine blood from the higher interpretation of cow protection. The "Cow" like Khadi, is symbolic of a way of life. "Cow Slaughter" therefore, would signify making impossible that way of life. We hope that those who stand for cow protection will realise the extensiveness of the cause which they stand for, and will whole-heartedly support this wider application of the principle.

THE ALL-INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION

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